

The use of mobile platforms - the current state of the problem

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Abstract: The aim of the article is to describe the specific aspects of the issue of user preferences in mobile marketing in today's ever-changing market environment. The article summarizes the theoretical basis of the issue of mobile marketing and online marketing. The article also focuses its attention on the market of mobile devices on a global scale, the issue of smartphones usage and describes the current state of mobile devices and their use for digital content on the Internet. Our aim is also to evaluate and highlight the opportunities that this area of marketing can bring in terms of marketing activities while pointing out the pitfalls of the issue.

Keywords: Mobile marketing, Smartphone, Tablet, Internet Marketing

JEL Classification: M30; M31

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1. Introduction

With the rapid development of information and communication technologies, especially in the online environment of the Internet, mobile platform are also developing. Mobile platforms are devices that in addition to its primary communication function fulfill also new functions through countless mobile applications and mobile Internet. It should be emphasized that the mobile marketing today is no longer just about bulk SMS messages. The nature of these devices - requiring an Internet connection to maximize the use of their potential - opens up the door to a wide range of marketing activities. With regard to the continuous popularity growth of mobile devices mobile marketing can be described as one of the fastest growing fields within the targeted marketing methods. Mobile platforms are nowadays highly popular among people – the fact that is also reflected in the time people spend using these devices, in particular smartphones, tablets, and classic mobile phones connected to the Internet. In this context, it is even possible to say that totally new marketing approaches, techniques and addressing actions focused on target groups are emerging.

2. Theoretical basis

Mobile marketing is a new marketing communication tool that uses mobile technology for the presentation of goods, services or ideas. It should be emphasized that mobile technology allows for immediate interaction with target groups anywhere and anytime depending on the geographical location or situation in which the device finds itself at the time of consumption of the marketing message, thus being an effective marketing communication tool. The above described options define mobile marketing as an ideal means for building a true one-to-one relationship in order to fulfill individual customer requirements (Sharl et al. 2005).

Nondek and Řeňčová (2000) state that the issue of mobile marketing is closely linked with online marketing tools modified and used for the purposes of activities carried out within the mobile marketing. In this context, the Internet marketing can be described as a qualitatively new form of marketing that can be characterized as the process of satisfying human needs for information, services or goods via the Internet.

American Mobile Marketing Association, which is one of the key organizations dealing with issues of mobile marketing, defines the term as follows: Mobile marketing is a communication through a wireless medium (mobile phone, tablet, etc.) used for the integrated distribution of certain content and direct response in the context of inter-connected marketing program (MMA 2009).

According to the European Mobile Industry Observatory (2011) the current mobile platforms are changing the way we live and work. The mobile industry can be characterized as a constantly evolving and highly innovative field. Moreover, innovative services change the dynamics of the industry. Mobile marketing is the modern area of marketing gradually established alongside the development of mobile network operators and visions of marketers to create a quick and direct channel of communication with their target groups. Based on the surveys regarding mobile marketing it can be stated that this mobile marketing is a huge "virtual" market. Given that this sector is ever-growing, it is possible to describe the mobile marketing as one of the fastest growing and most targeted marketing forms.

Kurtz (2011) in this regard states that online marketing is a special field of e-business, a strategic process of creation, distribution, promotion and pricing of products offered to target markets through the Internet, electronic tools and smart mobile devices - smartphones, tablets, etc..

Internet marketing is not only about the implementation of marketing activities in the Internet environment or in other digital media. These are the activities related to the knowledge of the target groups followed by adjusted marketing activities in the Internet environment. The essence of the e-marketing is also based on improving and enhancing the effectiveness of advertising and marketing activities (Madleňák et al. 2007).

Sedláček (2006) states that in practice we can meet with the concept of e-marketing which is synonymous with the notion of Internet marketing (including mobile marketing). In the broader sense e-marketing can be perceived as the use of the Internet and other information and communication technologies to achieve marketing objectives of the organization.

As a communication tool the Internet marketing is based on an estimate of the behavior and perceptions of the target group where on the basis of these facts the Internet marketing tries to find the most efficient methods and ways to bring Internet users to the target website and convince them to buy products or perform any other desired action. The authors add that in the online world marketing communication is becoming more direct as it allows users to give immediate feedback (Přikrylová – Jahodová 2010).

Based on the above definitions of the Internet marketing it can be concluded that this area of knowledge is much more than the implementation of marketing activities in the Internet environment or other digital media - mobile platforms.

3. The current state of the problem

Mobile platforms (including smartphones and tablets) are becoming more and more popular among users around the world. In this context we should point out the results of the analysis conducted by the company eMarketer (Statista 2016) which examined the global share of users using their mobile phones to access the Internet. Based on the results of the analysis conducted in 2015 this figure amounted to the value of 52.70 %. Based on the analysis eMarketer predicts for the period 2016 - 2019 the growth of users using their mobile phones to access the Internet by 10.70 % percentage points to 63.40 %. The average percentage annual growth can be estimated at 4.74 % (Figure 1).

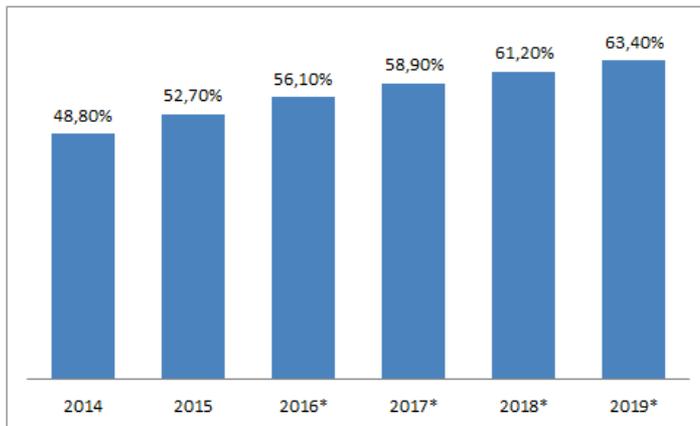


Figure 1. The global share of Internet users accessing the Internet via mobile phones

Another analysis that confirms the growing importance of mobile platforms is the analysis conducted by the company comScore (2015a) which compares the proportion of adult users in the United States accessing the internet exclusively through the desktop computer (note - including laptops) and the proportion of users accessing the Internet exclusively via mobile devices. Based on the above data analysis it can be concluded that the proportion of mobile users in early 2015 has exceeded the proportion of desktop users. These data can also predict a further decline in the number of users who access the Internet only through the desktop and the predominance of users who access the Internet only through mobile devices.

With regard to time spent on the Internet mobile devices have outnumbered desktops including laptops already in early 2014. In particular, in early 2014 mobile devices accounted for 55 % of total Internet traffic in the US, of which 47 % accounted for the access through mobile applications and 8 % through mobile Internet browser (O'Toole 2015).

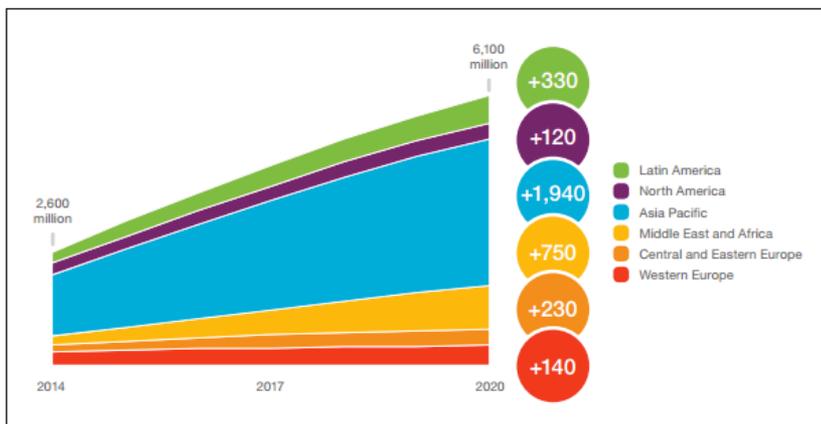


Figure 2. The use of smartphones by region for the period of 2014-2020

A closer look (Figure 2) at the use of smartphones is provided by the analysis conducted by Ericsson (Boxall 2015; Ericsson 2015) published in the middle of 2015. According to this analysis smartphones were in 2014 used by 2.6 billion people worldwide. The largest number of users is located in the region of Asia and the Pacific. The analysis predicts for 2020 the growth of smartphone users to 6.1 billion users, which represents an increase of 3.5

billion users (an increase of 134.62 %). Based on this prediction it can be stated that the largest increase in smartphones users in the period between 2015 and 2020 is predicted for the Asia and Pacific - an increase of 1.94 billion users, the Middle East and Africa - an increase of 0.75 billion users, and Latin America – an increase of 0.33 billion users. The analysis also points out that in the future smartphones will be responsible for 80 % of all mobile data transmitted on the global level.

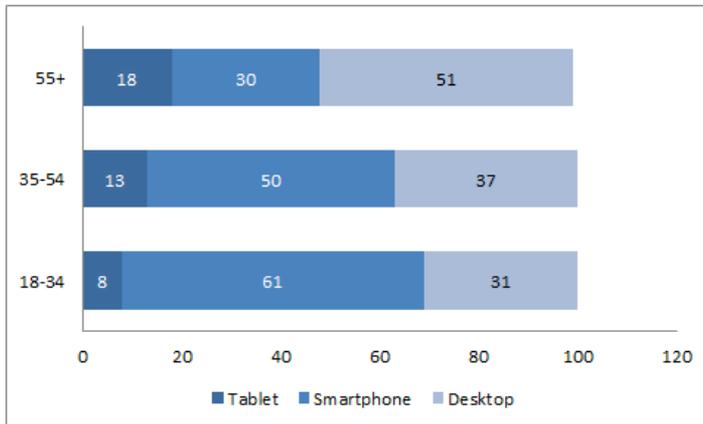


Figure 3. The use of selected platforms for the Internet access in the US

Another analysis highlighting the importance of mobile platforms as a useful tool for accessing digital content in the online environment is an analysis "Global Mobile Report" conducted by comScore (2015b) published in March 2015. This analysis provides an overview of user preferences with regard to platforms designed for accessing the Internet by the age structure of users. As indicated by Figure 3 users aged 18-34 years in the US (61 %) prefer smartphones when accessing the Internet. For the category of users from 35 to 54 years it is possible to identify different user preferences – smartphones accounted for a 50 % share. Unsurprisingly, the age group 55+ years prefer desktop PCs and laptops – 51 %. However, the surprising finding is that tablets recorded the highest proportion of use in the category of users - 55+ years - they accounted for 18 %.

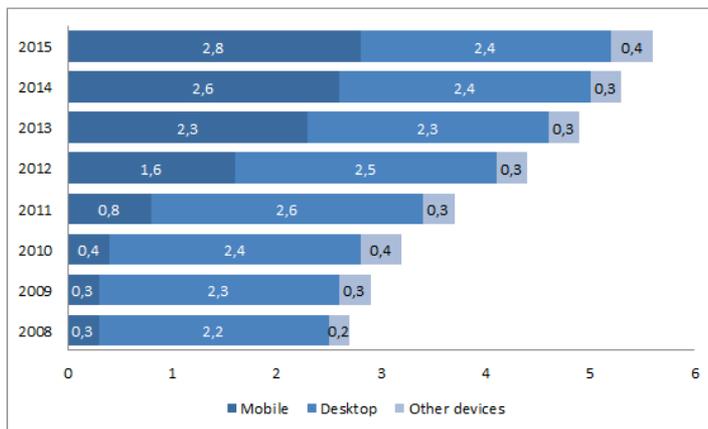


Figure 4. An overview of the development of selected platforms use for accessing the Internet internet (Hours per day)

The analysis conducted by Kleiner Perkins Caufield & Byers (Chafee 2015) offer a closer look at the platforms used for accessing the Internet. Given the results of the analysis, the average number of hours spent by adult users consuming digital media on the Internet in the US as of April 2015 amounted to 5.6 hours, which is an increase of 107.41 % when compared with the results from 2008. However, more significant finding is that mobile devices access to the Internet amounted to 51% of the total average time spent consuming digital media on the Internet. The difference between the two most common ways of accessing the Internet - smartphone and traditional PCs and laptops - accounted for 9 % (Figure 4).

4. Conclusion

Massive expansion of mobile services and high popularity of mobile devices among mobile users is an opportunity for organizations to create a space for communication with target groups, to present its products and services and also to build a positive image in the public eye. The issue of mobile platforms that involve devices such as smartphones and tablets shall be perceived as an integral part of any marketing activities companies want to develop in highly competitive market. The current importance of mobile marketing as a part of Internet marketing from the point of view of user preferences and companies is undeniable. The growing importance of mobile devices is confirmed by the results of the chosen analyzes described above - eMarketer (Statista 2016), comScore (2015a), O'Toole (2015), Ericsson (Boxall 2015; Ericsson 2015), comScore (2015b), Kleiner Perkins Caufield & Byers (Chafee 2015).

In our opinion, the popularity of mobile devices as a communication tool as well as a dominant tool for the consumption of digital content on the Internet is going to grow. This trend is reflected in the level of its adaptation to the marketing activities of organizations competing for customers and modern and innovative forms of marketing communication.

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